

North Carolina Cost Share Programs Review Summary  
FY2021

County	<u>Hertford</u>	Date of Previous Review/Report	<u></u>
District Staff Name(s)	<u>Eric Parker, Dottie Roberson</u>	Date	<u>5/25-26, 2021</u>
NRCS Staff Name(s)	<u>Brian Saunders</u>		
Division Representative(s)	<u>Lisa Fine, Sydney Mucha</u>		
Additional Participants	<u></u>		

Questions	Division Findings				Division Comments	District Plan of Action Required		SWCD Plan of Action	Proposed Timeline for Implementation	Division Response to Plan of Action (date)
	Commendation	Recommendation	Corrective Action	No Concerns/ Not Applicable		Yes	No			
Section 1: Application Procedures and Tracking Progress (BMP Implementation and Payments) Questions in this section focus on how the district advertises the program, how applications are developed, how contracts are developed, how funds are tracked and how the board approves each.										
How/when are the district board meetings scheduled?				X	Meetings are set for the year as the third Tuesday of the month except for May and October when there are no meetings.		X			
How do you notify the public of the board meeting schedule? Does it adhere to the Open Meetings Law?				X	Notice is on the hall bulletin board, schedule sent to Board of Commissioners which the clerk posts on the county website, in newspaper, Community calendar. Yes, it meets Open Meetings Law.		X			

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Please describe the district's process for providing assistance to applicants by assessing resource concerns to determine if a BMP is “needed and feasible” and then developing the conservation plan.				X	Potential applicants call the office or come in person and request assistance, district staff visit farms to assess concerns, determine if eligible, begin application process with contract to come after that.		X			
Does the district provide technical assistance without cost share funds?				X	Yes.		X			
What type of technical assistance is provided without cost share funds?				X	The district works on tile drain design, ditches, residential drainage/flooding, waste management plans, erosion control assistance.		X			
How does the district prioritize which applicants get funded? Do you prioritize certain watersheds, BMPs, type of operation, first come - first served, etc?				X	The district prioritizes based on watershed.		X			
Once each application is considered, what does the district do with the score? Do you fund based on the score, use another system to prioritize, create eligibility categories, or other?				X	The highest score is funded first then they go down the list until all funds are encumbered. No one hasn't been eligible that has applied.		X			
Describe the process the district follows when there is a tie on applicants' scores.				X	They use the date of the application to decide who to fund.		X			
Does the district purposefully withhold a percentage of funds until a later date in the program year to be able to fund higher quality projects (more water quality or water quantity				X	No, the district does not hold back funds. They only have one batching period unless there's a supplemental allocation.		X			


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benefits) or does the district fund applications until it runs out of funding each batching period? Does the district automatically fund cooperators who applied but did not get funded in the previous program year due to lack of funds or does it re-rank them with new applications?					This hasn't happened in their district but the policy is to re-rank with other applicants and not automatically fund them.					
Are applications, contracts and requests for payments reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?				X	Yes. See below.		X			
Are application, contracts and requests for payments motions/decisions recorded in the board minutes?				X	Yes.		X			
Has your district delegated signature authority for requests for payments to be approved outside of board meetings? How are they recorded in your board meeting minutes?			X		Yes. However, RFPs that are signed outside the board meeting are brought up at the next board meeting and voted on again. <b><u>Corrective Action</u></b> Once signed outside a board meeting, they are considered approved and should only be brought up as an informational item.	X		All RFP's signed outside of Board Meetings will be brought up at the next Board meeting as an information item on the agenda.	Immediately	Plan of Action accepted.
Applicants are limited when applying for incentive BMPs. How does your district track applicants so they do not go over the practice caps and to be sure they haven't already "adopted" the practice?	X				Dottie has a spreadsheet that goes back several years and tracks by year, practice, cooperator. It's color coordinated and very helpful. <b><u>Commendation</u></b>		X			
If multiple partners farm together, how does the district track individual applicants as one operation or entity?	X				Dottie's spreadsheet is a great source of information. It tracks cooperators per incentive practice as far back as the 1980s. <b><u>Commendation</u></b> – Dottie is to be commended for her record		X			

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					keeping across decades of history. Eric Parker knows all the farmers and can also go to FSA office if need be.					
At what point in the application process does the district develop the contract? (After Ranking, After Application Approved?) Describe this process.				X	The district develops the contract after the ranking, if it's close to a board meeting the contract may be completed as well. If not close, then they discuss the application and the contract gets created later.		X			
Describe how the district reviews the contract with the applicant. Do you explain that work cannot begin until the contract is approved by the division?				X	The district talks to the cooperators in the field – talk about when the work can begin, sends packet out with letter to not start until division approval is given.		X			
What procedures do you follow for notifying the applicant that work can begin?				X	See above		X			
Describe the district/board's procedure for approving supervisor contracts.				X	The supervisor contract gets ranked like everyone else. There is no penalty or benefit given for being a supervisor.		X			
Is it documented in the Board minutes that the supervisor abstained from discussing his/her own contract and from voting?				X	Yes, supervisors abstain from voting on their own interests.		X			
Is each contract reviewed in detail with the board before approval? Do you project CS2?				X	The staff discusses the contracts with the board. They are not projecting CS2 yet but did just get one of the TVs.		X			


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What information do you provide the applicant?				X	The district provides the approval letter, contract, forms, designs, Ag Cost Share Policy summary, standards, a letter at the end stating work is complete and a copy of the RFP.		X			
What technical assistance do you provide during the BMP installation process to ensure the BMP is installed correctly and by the contract deadline?				X	The staff works with the cooperator on structural BMPs, surveys for rock-lined outlets, checks cover crops and establishment of vegetation.		X			
How do you track the Commission’s interim performance milestone? One-third of the work must be completed within 12 months of division approval. Are you using CS2?				X	The staff use CS2 to see when the date is approaching. This has not been an issue in their district while Eric has been there. Dottie’s spreadsheet has a column for tracking the 1/3 date		X			
If 1/3 of the work has not been completed within 12 months and the cooperator requests additional time, is the district recording 6-month extensions in the board minutes?				X	I did not find a record of 6-month extensions in the board minutes but I did find evidence of the 1 year extensions. District stated it has not been an issue in their district about starting work on time.		X			
What documentation do you include in the contract file that certifies that the BMP was inspected and is installed to the standards?				X	The district includes the 6 notes and letters for engineering items.		X			
Are BMPs measured then certified before the request for payment is approved? How is this documented?				X	Yes, field visits and JAA person does and signs RFPs. Recorded in 6 notes as well.		X			


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Section 2: Spot Checks and Compliance Issues										
Questions in this section focus on how the district reviews BMPs for compliance and how maintenance and/or non-compliance issues are addressed.										
Are all BMPs under the waste management category spot checked for the first five years after installation? This applies to all farms that fall under the thresholds that are regulated by DWR.				X	Yes. However, there are no active waste contracts. Most producers use EQIP for drystacks since they pay more.		X			
How does the district notify the NRCS area office or division to conduct spot checks for contracts that need to be spot checked by someone outside of the district? (Refer to <a href="#">Spot Check Policy</a> )				X	District pulls contracts. NRCS district staff marks supervisor contracts in report they send to management and supervisor contracts are then reviewed annually.		X			
How does your district notify individuals that have BMPs that are out of compliance or need maintenance? (Refer to <a href="#">Non-Compliance Policy</a> )				X	The district will call if they have a phone number then they'll follow-up with a letter.		X			
How are supervisors notified of BMPs that are out of compliance or need maintenance at any time throughout the year?				X	Some supervisors will be on the spot check and then all issues are brought up at the next board meeting.		X			
Does the district provide a written notice that the BMP must be repaired or re-implemented within 30 working days? (Vegetative practices have to be reestablished within one calendar year.) Is a copy of the notification kept in the contract file?				X	There has only been one for a cooperator who paid back the money.  Yes.		X			
If the BMP was not repaired or re-implemented, was repayment requested? Please provide documentation: contract numbers and/or names.				X	Yes and cooperator repaid the funds. Charles Brown 46-2019-002		X			
Is the district notifying the division of non-compliance and resolutions?				X	Yes.		X			


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Section 3: Record Keeping										
Questions in this section focus on how funds are managed and accounted for, maintaining proper design and job approval authority, as well as disclosure forms.										
Do you use the CS2 reports to show the board available program funds, encumbrances and expenditures?				X	The district does not use CS2 reports but does put the amounts of the funds on the agenda.		X			
How are technical assistance and operating funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	Dottie has a spreadsheet to track everything. Audited by County Finance Office by outside CPA firm. End of fiscal year.		X			
Who in the office does work for Cost Share Programs?				X	Eric Parker, Brian Saunders, Dottie does the office work.		X			
Is proper job approval authority (JAA) documented for each technical and cost share position? Please provide a copy of the latest approved JAA. (Print a copy of what is in the data base. Does it match the district's version?)				X	Yes, 2012 version was the latest.		X			


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Section 4: Contract Reviews and Site Visits Below is a list of the contracts the division reviewed. Spot checks were also conducted. Notes include recommendations and/or corrective action for contract files as well as the BMP. Contracts/BMPs are listed by contract number.										
Contract Number: 46-2016-800 (s) 46-2020-802 Applicant Name: Everwood Farms BMP: Ag Pond Repair/retrofit  		X			No concerns with contract file.  <b>Recommendation:</b> BMP needs to mow around the pond and not spray. District should check the road for erosion on spot checks (see pic). The crop fields beside the pond could use drop nozzles on center pivots to save water. District should consider checking for interest in the Conservation Irrigation Conversion BMP .	X		Contract will be checked periodically for erosion. Eric will check to see if the producer is interested in Conservation Irrigation Conversion.	After PY2022 AgWRAP funds are allocated to the district.	Plan of Action accepted.




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Contract Number: 46-2014-004 Applicant Name: Samuel Howell BMP: grade stabilization structure  				X	No concerns with contract file. No concerns with BMP.		X			

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Contract Number: 46-2017-002 (s) 46-2018-004 Applicant Name: George Thomas BMP: rock-lined outlet  				X	No concerns with contract file.  Currently no concerns with BMP. <b>NOTE:</b> The outlet may need maintenance after a few years and sprayed with a broadleaf weed killer. District should make note to check in a few years.		X	If not randomly chosen the contract will be checked in PY2022 Spot Checks for vegetation.		Plan of Action accepted.

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<div>Contract Number: 46-2013-004</div> <div>Applicant Name: Deborah Simmons</div> <div>BMP: field border</div> <div></div>		X			<div>No concerns with contract file.</div> <div>Part of field border nearest the road needs widening before the ditch by the highway. Appears to still be functioning but isn't very wide.</div> <div><b>Recommendation:</b> reshaping and reseeding to appropriate width.</div>	X		Landowner has agreed to pay back pro-rated portion of the contract for none compliance.	Landowner has already paid back funds and refund has been acknowledged by the Division.	Plan of Action was accepted. Repayment has been made and contract issue is closed.

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Contract Number: 46-2015-004 Applicant Name: Brinkley Lands LLC BMP: critical area planting  				X	No concerns with contract file.  No concerns with BMP.		X			

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Contract Number: 46-2013-501 Applicant Name: Town of Ahoskie BMP: Pet waste receptacles  			X		No concerns with contract file.  <b><u>Corrective Action</u></b> – receptacles are not working – bottoms rusted out, no bags present.	X		**District has already notified and gotten a response from the Town. Receptacles have been repaired and now have bags.	Currently	Plan of Action was accepted and completed. No further action required.